

# PROBINGNAG

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 Brobdingnag #76      1966AQ (S'11)      1966AV (F'09)      2 December 1967  
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Game 1966AQ

Spring 1911

WILL THE BOYS BE OUT OF THE TRENCHES FOR  
 CHRISTMAS?

## The moves:

RUSSIA (Reinsel): Army Norway to Edinburgh. Army Sweden to Denmark. Army Denmark to Kiel. Army Berlin support army Denmark to Kiel. Army Prussia to Silesia. Army Munich to Ruhr. Army Silesia to Munich. Army Bohemia support army Silesia to Munich. Army Tyrolia support army Silesia to Munich. Army Trieste to Serbia. Army Serbia to Rumania. Fleet Norwegian Sea to North Atlantic Ocean. Fleet North Sea convoy army Norway to Edinburgh. Fleet Helgoland Bight support fleet North Sea.

FRANCE (Thompson): Fleet Skagerrak to North Sea. Fleet English Channel support fleet Skagerrak to North Sea. Fleet Brest to Mid-Atlantic Ocean. Army Paris to Picardy. Army Kiel to Munich. Army Ruhr support army Kiel to Munich. Army Burgundy support army Kiel to Munich. Army Marseilles to Piedmont. Fleet Gulf of Lyon support army Marseilles to Piedmont. Fleet Tyrrhenian Sea stand. Fleet Tunis support fleet Tyrrhenian Sea. Fleet Western Mediterranean support fleet Tyrrhenian Sea.

TURKEY (Greene): Fleet Apulia support fleet Ionian Sea. Fleet Naples to Tyrrhenian Sea. Fleet Ionian Sea support fleet Naples to Tyrrhenian Sea. Fleet Rome support army Tuscany. Army Piedmont to Marseilles. Fleet Smyrna to Aegean Sea. Army Tuscany, not ordered, stands. Army Bulgaria, not ordered, stands.

Underlined moves do not succeed. The French army Kiel is dislodged and has only Holland open for retreat. The Turkish army Piedmont is dislodged and has only Venice open for retreat.

Deadline for moves for Fall 1911 is Saturday 16 December 1967.

## Press Releases:

H aifa. Abdul Camel Green, with the Sultan's blessings, left today for St. Petersburg. This latest blow to the Peeriest Party continues to bring about the waning of their strength. Yet for sure, the Peery supporters will try some typically under-handed stunt before the elections next fall. Peerikibutyz. The PPP (elsewhere referred to as Peery Perfection Personified but for our purposes here meaning Progressive Peeriest Party) today announced it had agreed to sponsor the establishment of hundreds of kibutzes throughout Palestine in an effort to find homes for the thousands of victims of the Greene Plague that almost wiped out a good part of the country last spring. The disease,

commonly recognized by its symptoms of extreme lasciviousness, promiscuousness, and degenerateness, can only be conquered by will power and skillful application of Peery's Potent Pacifier. The kibutzes, the first of which has already been erected in the Sinai Desert and named for the first Jewish member of Parliament, Disraeli Kibutz, has been filled with hundreds of teenagers, all formerly victims of the Greene Plague.

Meanwhile Ben Peeri refused to debate with Abdul Gamel Green on nationwide TV because he claimed that the television stations were all partial to Abdul and would refuse to do justice to Peeri's own brilliant charisma.

Walla Walla Kibutz. Prime Minister elect Ben Peeri today made his first major policy speech since winning a narrow victory in the recent election. Said Peeri: "Hene, Hene, Tekel, Upharsin", which immediately caused a fourteen point drop in the value of Transiron and United Nuclear Corporation stocks on the Palestine Stock Market.

St. Peerigrad. Rumors confirmed that the missing Dead Sea Scrolls, reportedly containing first hand accounts of the martyrdom of St. Peery had been purchased by the government and would be transferred to St. Peerigrad for study.

St. Petersburg. The Russian government has declared its intention to liberate all the British Isles.

Paris. France will not allow Turkey to profit from her aggression. Turkey conned France into attacking Russia but, fortunately, Turkish military leaders are lousy.

Constantinople. France, just surrender, like miss a move or something, for your cause is hopeless.

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Players who expect to have a change of address over the Christmas holidays are requested to advise the editor immediately, together with the effective dates.

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Game 1966AV

Fall 1909

BRITISH GLIMS IN GERMANY AND LEVANT  
GOVERNMENTS OF CENTRAL POWERS SILENT

The moves:

ENGLAND (Wells): Army Picardy to Burgundy. Army Belgium to Ruhr. Fleet Holland to Kiel. Fleet North Sea to Denmark. Army Sweden support fleet North Sea to Denmark. Army Sweden support fleet North Sea to Denmark. Fleet St. Petersburg (north coast) stand. Army Wales to Brest. Fleet English Channel convoy army Wales to Brest. Fleet Greece to Bulgaria (south coast). Fleet Constantinople to Ankara. Fleet Tunis support fleet Tyrrhenian Sea. Fleet Tyrrhenian Sea stand. Fleet Marseilles to Piedmont.

RUSSIA (Zelazny): Army Moscow to St. Petersburg. Army Warsaw to Silesia. Army Armenia to Smyrna. Army Bulgaria to Constantinople. Army Serbia support ITALIAN army Albania to Greece. Fleet Aegean Sea to Constantinople. Fleet Ionian Sea support

ENGLISH fleet Greece to Ionian Sea.

GERMANY (Shagrin): No moves received. Fleet Baltic and armies Livonia, Vienna, Tyrolia, Piedmont, and Munich stand.

ITALY (Francis): No moves received. Fleet Naples and armies Rome, Trieste, and Albania, all stand.

Underlined moves do not succeed. The Russian order to the Ionian fleet is illegal as a unit may not be ordered to support against its own position. The German army Denmark is annihilated having been dislodged and having received no orders.

As a result of these moves the belligerent powers control the following supply centres:

ENGLAND: 3 home, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Kiel, St. Petersburg, Belgium, Brest, Marseilles, 2 Iberian, Tunis, Greece, Ankara. 16 in all. May build 3 units.

RUSSIA: Sevastopol, Moscow, Warsaw, Smyrna, Constantinople, Rumania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Budapest. 9 in all. May build two.

GERMANY: Berlin, Munich, Holland, Paris, Vienna. 5 in all. Must remove one.

ITALY: 3 home, Trieste. 4 in all. No adjustment.

Deadline for adjustment orders is Saturday, 16 December 1967.

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#### NEW BLOOD

The following have written indicating an interest in Postal Diplomacy:

Claire Toynbee, 1570 West 63rd Ave., Vancouver 14, British Columbia, Canada.

L. Ritter, 120 Berwick St., Elizabeth, N.J., 0720(?)

Tim Wiedel, 5616 Churchway, Greendale, Wisc., 53129.

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Spring is a virgin, Fall a widow.

- Old Russian proverb.

1901, no doubt.

- Old Diplomacy player.

Sealed Bag

John Boardman, 592 16th St., Brooklyn, NY, 11218:

((Referring to discussion in EROB 73 and 74)) The clergy as a source of diplomatic talent? Yes, but only in those cultures in which literacy and learning are the monopoly of the clergy. The medieval kings of Europe had to choose their ministers and diplomats from the clergy because there was just no other body of talent from which to get it. More recently, in less developed countries, look at the political roles played by Prince Bishop Peter Petrovich of Montenegro, Bishop Zadavetz and Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, President-Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus, Sheikh Abdallah of Kashmir, etc., etc. In most peasant cultures, the locally established church and the army are the only media by which a talented man from the lower classes can work his way upward in society.

((+(Urban VIII was pope at the time of Cardinal Richelieu's death. His words on learning of the death of that statesman - a statesman earlier mentioned in this correspondence as being a good example of a successful clerical diplomat - is a fair judgment, I think, on the careers of many clerics who have held high political office: "If there is no God, Richelieu has done very well for himself; if there is a God, he will have much to answer for." -jamco)+))

Hal Haus, 681 "I" St., Space D-11, Chula Vista, Calif., 92010:

I find that there are now 25 completed seven country games and the results are as follows up to and including the last year played:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Game Years</u>	<u>Years Completed</u>	<u>Deficit</u>
France	300	263	- 37
Turkey	300	243	- 57
England	300	232	- 68
Austria	300	229	- 71
Russia	300	215	- 85
Italy	300	213	- 87
Germany	300	195	-105

Out of the 25 games I find that France completed 16.

Turkey	17 out of 25
England	14 out of 25
Austria	13 out of 25
Russia	12 out of 25
Italy	11 out of 25
Germany	7 out of 25.

((+(I think your results are in conformity with general experience. France is not often eliminated and, when it is, the elimination occurs late in the game. Of the two perennial front runners, England and Turkey, who have been battling for the front position, which has changed hands between them several times, Turkey is much the

more secure; it can be eliminated if ganged up on during the early game. However, if it ever builds to 5 or 6 forces it is virtually assured survival until the end of the game. England, on the other hand, is more like the middle powers in this respect: it can be eliminated at any time, depending on the alliance pattern. Germany's position on the board is indeed unenviable. -jamcc)+))

Charles Wells, 3678 Lindholm Road, Cleveland, Ohio, 44120.:

I think it is neat that on the basis of a remark I made you designed a rating system which now has us tied for first place. That is a Brilliant Ploy.

I have a criticism of your system for ending drawn games. ((See RMOB 71)). If after three years no supply centre has been transferred, you will ask the players to submit a victory plan. Suppose one does. Then whether or not you announce the fact the other player(s) will know this has happened because the game will continue. They will therefore be on the lookout for tricky maneuvers by their opponent that they might not have watched for before.

I have an idea for another way out of the difficulty: (1) If all the surviving players ask for a draw, it will be declared, as you have it. (2) In the absence of a draw or victory the game will continue indefinitely.

However, the Gamesmaster will adopt several procedures which will likely persuade the players to accede to a draw. (1) An additional fee will be charged for every five years of play after 1920, provided no supply centers change hands during the preceding five years. (2) A player may submit a set of moves which will apply to each season thereafter unless he changes them. This will effectively remove any player's hope of winning because his opponent failed to submit moves. (The fact that the player has done this will be announced on his request).

If a player is faced with two opponents, who united can hold him off to a draw, he may decide to stab it out in hopes of persuading one of his opponents to stab the other. In some cases, of course, such a stab would result in an immediate win for the first player, but in other cases there might be more doubt, giving a player faced with two opponents some hope of splitting them up. To take care of such situations, I would institute a third alternative: (3) One or more players may submit a set of moves to apply to each season thereafter and give up the right to change them, publicly announcing the fact. Two players may do this jointly, each certifying that he wishes to do this and that he has seen the moves the other player wishes to submit, specifying them to avoid a double cross. Obviously, faced with this situation, an opponent of this perpetual alliance might be more easily persuaded to give up hope.

After all is said and done, a player may remain recalcitrant. I suggest that in the last analysis the Gamesmaster simply refuse to run the game any longer. This should not be done unless all but one player have sent in perpetual moves under alternative (3),

which we might call "per etual moves without option" to distinguish them from "perpetual moves with option", as under condition 2.

((+Well, if one can't come reasonably near the top in one's own rating list, why set one up? Although John Moning tells me that Derek Nelson's recent suggestion, (Jutland Jollies #5) results in a worse score for Derek than he has in present listings.

I agree, in a way, with your objection to my system for ending drawn games. A few weeks ago some one wrote me with the suggestion that players have the right to extend deadlines when they have delicate negotiations going on. My objection to that was precisely the same as yours, namely that it would alert other players to the fact that an alliance switch was impending. I am not so sure that the objection is so sound in the multi-player draw case, however. By that stage the game has usually degenerated to straight war, and there isn't much to be given away by published statements.

Your solution is much the same as Cliff Ollila's in the last issue, that is, make the blighters pay if they want to continue. I rather like the twist that he gives to it: If it is one or two players who are holding out, all the others being willing to accept the draw, he, or they, must do the paying for all, and those willing to accept the draw are not charged. -jamcc+))

Gene Frosnitz, 200 Clinton St., Brooklyn, NY, 11201:

Re rating systems. I like your idea of rating games in progress, but there are two areas in which I disagree with your system. First, on games in progress: While it is true that supply center count is often not an accurate reflexion of strength, primarily because it doesn't show the alliances in existence, still it's more accurate than making no differentiation at all between players still in the game. Since, most of the time, the player with 10 supply centers will be in better shape than the one with 6 centers, isn't it more accurate to distinguish between them in rating?

Therefore, why not do the following? Since a difference is probably not significant, give a surviving player one point for each person eliminated or each player over whom he has an edge of two or more centers, and give him a rating of minus one for each player whom he trails by two or more centers.

Also, you might set an arbitrary point, in game years, which a game has to reach to be counted. My suggestion would be to count games which have completed Fall, 1903.

My other point deals with the fact that your rating system unduly rewards second and third place finishes, and discourages a balance of power strategy. I would like to see a greater reward for wins, e.g. the following is a possibility for ratings (in order of finish) +9, +4, +2, 0, -3, -5, -7.

One possible drawback of this is that you'd be using a

different system for completed games than for games in progress; however, I don't consider that too serious, for under my suggestion, a player in the lead might be rated as plus 5 until he nails down the victory, and then be given 4 additional points, which seems fair enough.

((+There is only one Rating System, so far proposed, which can be run completely on a current basis, namely the centre-year system. In it, the final score is just the total supply centers held each year, added up for all years of the game. The total up to 1907 might just as well be published then, rather than wait until the end of the game. As I understand it, John Koning proposes to publish a current rating list in slab run on that basis.

As to your criticism of the Completed Game Listing, in that it does not sufficiently reward the winner in comparison with other players I am in complete agreement. As several times mentioned here that is the bad feature of this rating system, as it is also of the centre-year system. It is to provide a correction to this defect that winners are indicated, as a supplementary feature. Any attempt to correct this in the rating list itself, however, invariably brings in an arbitrary element. Your proposal effectively uses the same figures as the EROB scheme except that it gives a bonus of 3 points to the winner. Why 3? Why not 5, say? One of the main reasons for introducing the EROB Rating List in the first place was to avoid arbitrary features of this type. If you want an arbitrary system then let me recommend the Reinsel system, appearing in Big Brother. It is just a mass of arbitrary elements. But it comes fairly close, I think, to one's subjective feeling as to how much a victory is better than survival, and how much survival is to be preferred to elimination.

John Koning also, I believe, plans to publish an article contrasting and comparing the results of the various systems. The thing that impresses me in casually glancing through those various listings, is how similar they are. In spite of the wide differences in the principles upon which they operate they give, in a general way, the same outcome. John Koning, himself, is probably treated more differently in the listings than anyone else. He is a well known player who nearly always survives and has frequently achieved a draw or a second position, but, so far, he has not won a game. The Reinsel system which works on the basis of your own thought, i.e. victory is the important thing, ranks him in 13th position. The EROB system, which is kinder to strong contenders who doesn't quite make it, puts 4th. I am not certain of his position in the Lebling mean-rate-of-growth system but it is close to the EROB one. So in a listing which contains close to a hundred names, there is a difference of 9 between the rankings of one rating scheme and another. This is, I think, the greatest difference, for a given individual which will be found anywhere. So that, considering the crudity of all the ratings schemes, there is very fair agreement between them.

Notice that the EROB score, as it now stands, has a meaning. If a certain player has a score of +14 it means that, in his completed games to date, the number of players whom he has done better than,

exceeds, by 14, the number of players who have surpassed him. Add an arbitrary element, your victory bonus of 3 points or any other, and that simple definite element disappears. The rating would still be a measure of performance but would no longer be translatable into plain English, as is now the case. Victories are certainly important; and they are consequently given, as an additional feature, in the EROB Rating list. But any such arbitrary element such as you propose would be, in my opinion, a retrograde step; no such change will be made in the EROB Rating System. -jamcc+))

John Moning, 2008 Sherman, Apt. 1, Evanston, Ill., 60201, wrote pointing out that Rating lists given in EROB actually rank players according to number of forces, not number of centres. Also that centre year charts, published here from time to time, do the same, i.e. they are unit-year charts, not centre-year charts.

((+(Correct. When I first started keeping charts of all games in progress, about two and a half years ago now, it was units, not centres that I listed. At present I list both. But in publishing charts here, for the earlier portion of long games, we are back in the period when I didn't actually list centres.

As to the Rating list. The victory criterion, as laid down in the year book, is based on forces, not centres held. It seemed to me, therefore, that for purposes of determining who was second, third, or what not, forces should again be the deciding factor, in the few cases where there is a difference in ranking by the two methods. I must admit that previous descriptions of the EROB Rating system given here have not been clear in this respect and have usually referred to centres when, in fact, units have been used- jamcc+))

John Boardman, 592 16th St., Brooklyn, NY, 11218, wrote to say that issues #144, 145 and 146 of Graustark would be mailed together to non-players in Graustark games. The mailing to be about mid-December. What will we ever use as a simile for punctuality and regularity if Graustark begins appearing irregularly?

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#### MORE NEW BLOOD

While stencilling this last page I received a note from

Robert Mickson, 848 Duff Drive, Port Arthur, Texas, 77640

who states that he is buying a set and that he is anxious to enter a postal game.

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Proddingnag is edited and published by John McCallum, Halston, Alberta, Canada. It sells for ten cents a copy. Copies are available on most back issues. Proddingnag has no game vacancies at present but many other publications do; write for a list of openings in Postal Diplomacy games.